

REPLY

To: Examiner of the Patent Office

1. Identification of the International Application: PCT/JP2004/017851

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5. Content of Reply:

Claims are amended as follows.

Claim 1(amended) An elastic nonwoven fabric made of a nonwoven fabric manufactured by the spunbonding method, wherein a lot of holes are formed in said nonwoven fabric by the needle punching method, and synthetic resin is impregnated into said nonwoven fabric.

Claim 2 (deleted)

Claim 3 (amended) An elastic nonwoven fabric in accordance with Claim 1, wherein said synthetic resin is a thermoplastic resin.

Claim 4(amended) An interior material consisting of said elastic nonwoven fabric in accordance with claim 1 or 3, as a surface layer material, and a base material to whose surface said elastic nonwoven fabric is attached as a surface layer, then being molded into a prescribed shape.

The reference cited in document 1 (JP4-222265 A) discloses a nonwoven fabric made by the spunbonding method and having a lot of holes. Nevertheless, said holes are formed by projections heated at a temperature higher than the melting point of said nonwoven fabric, not by needle punching. Further, no synthetic resin is impregnated into said nonwoven fabric.

The reference cited in document 2 (JP11-335955 A) discloses a nonwoven fabric in which fibrillated fibers are bonded by a synthetic resin binder, but does not disclose the forming of a lot of holes by needle punching.

The reference cited in document 3 (JP9-25469 A) discloses the use of a phenol group resin as a binder of fibers, but does not disclose that said fibers are spunbonded and have a lot of needle punched holes.

In the present invention, to improve the elasticity of said nonwoven fabric, a lot of holes are formed in said nonwoven fabric by needle punching, and further the rigidity of said nonwoven fabric is improved by impregnating synthetic resin into said nonwoven fabric, said effect of the present invention being unexpected from the disclosures of Literatures 1 to 3. Accordingly, the present invention has novelty and an inventive step.

IAP15 Rec'd PCT/PTO 08 JUN 2006

Applicant Masanori Ogawa, et. al.
Client Usami International
Date June 8, 2006
File No. 2710/76418 DSD
Atty.
10/582179

Kindly acknowledge receipt of the accompanying

For: **ELASTIC NONWOVEN FABRIC**, Express Mail Certificate bearing Express Mail Label #EV554807575US; Transmittal letter in triplicate; Twenty-page specification including abstract; Figs. 1-3 arranged in two sheets; and Tables 1-2; A copy of English translation of the PCT request form filed with the JP Receiving Office on December 8, 2004 (Form PCT/RO/10); A copy of a Notification of receipt of record copy (form PCT/IB/301); A copy of a Notification of the recording of a change (form PCT/IB/306); A copy of Notification of withdrawal of international application or designations (form PCT/IB/307); A copy of the first page of International Application as published on June 23, 2005 under International Publication No. WO 2005/056902A1, including the international Search Report (Form PCT/ISA/210); A copy of Notification concerning transmittal of copy of international applications as published or republished (form CT/IB/311); A copy of a First Notice informing the applicant of the communication of the international application to the designated offices which do not apply the thirty month time limit under article 22(1)(Form PCT/IB/308)(First Notice); A copy of a Second and Supplementary Notice informing the applicant of the communication of the international application to designated offices which apply the thirty month time limit under 22(1)(Form PCT/IB/308 (Second and supplementary notice); A copy of an Information concerning elected offices notified of their election (form PCT/IB/332); A copy of an international Preliminary Examination Report in Japanese (form PCT/IPEA/409); A copy of the English translation of the specification as originally filed, including claims, abstract and Figs. 1-3; A copy of an English translation of a first Reply and Amendment; Declaration and Power of Attorney (executed); Assignment (executed) and cover sheet; Preliminary Amendment; Check in the amount of \$490.00; and Return Postcard.

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